DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 444 EA 028 422

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TITLE Complementarity between Individual Action and Organizational Action in Education: An Institutional Explanation.

PUB DATE Mar 97
NOTE 41p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 24-28, 1997).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Bureaucracy; *Educational Environment; Educational Sociology; Elementary Secondary Education; Organizational Climate; *Organizational Theories; *Organizations (Groups); *School Culture; *Social Structure

IDENTIFIERS *Ethnomethodology

ABSTRACT

Individual action is a basic analytical unit in educational action. This paper examines how individual and organizational actions in schools draw their true meanings from the institutional structure of education and complement each other in creating different structures of meanings in different practical educational situations. The paper argues for an emerging theoretical clarity in the relationship between the concepts of individual action and organizational action when the analysis is institutionally grounded. The paper explores the theoretical possibility that individual and organizational action in school may be conceptualized as embodiments of the institutional structure of education. The conceptual framework is based on the social life within institutions in order to explain the link between individual and organizational action. The paper concludes that actions of individuals who provide the service of education within schools are not solely determined by individual school organization. Individual actions are primarily influenced by the institutional structure of education. Any interpretation of teachers' and principals' actions must consider the historical, social, and cognitive aspects of the institutional structure of education. The institutional structure of education is not purely bureaucratic; rather, it is a system of meanings, ideologies, rules, and values that evolve in a world culture. (Contains 53 references.) (LMI)

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ED 408 686

Complementarity between Individual Action and Organizational Action In Education: An Institutional Explanation

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association
Chicago
March 26, 1997

EA 028 422

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Complementarity between Individual Action and Organizational Action In Education: An institutional Explanation

Introduction

Individual action in education, action taken by each individual in providing or facilitating the service of education, is a basic analytical unit in educational action. Though the popular assumptions behind the existing educational division of labor and the related role structure built around the system of educational action can face some challenges at a certain stage of analysis, at least in the most general level, the present discourse on education permits one to identify the concept of individual action related to facilitating education in school organizations mainly with what teachers and principals do in schools. In this paper 'individual action' is treated as a general conceptual category which includes the educational actions of teachers and principals. On the other hand, the fundamental organizational form through which the complex process of educational action occurs in the modern society is school. Individual action in school is organized within the school organization. The paper defines the concept of 'organizational action' as a structured extension of individual action.

This paper is a conceptual inquiry of which the central focus is on examining the theoretical relevance and possibility of conceptualizing that the concepts of individual action and organizational action in school draw their true meanings from the institutional structure of education and complement each other in creating different structures of meanings in different practical educational situations. The paper argues for an emerging theoretical clarity in the relationship between the concepts of individual action and organizational action when the analysis is institutionally grounded. Giddens (1991) sees institutions of modernity as mechanisms which develop self-identity of the individuals. Regarding individual and organization, current thinking shows that

> The self cannot escape organizations. Indeed, self *is* organization in a profound sense, though the self may behave and feel quite differently as it moves from organization to organization - from fragment to fragment of its personal world (p. 54)..... .....Organizations may be seen as pure process, as action where individuals change ideas into behaviour and possibilities into consequences. Our conceptions of organizations must be as complex as the reality we try to understand"..... Organizations themselves are expressions of how people believe they should relate to each other" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p.55).

The paper treats both individual and organization in education as units of analysis of which the major source of influence is the institutional structure of education. It explores the theoretical possibility of conceptualizing individual action and organizational action in school as embodiments of the institutional structure of education. This will serve as a part of a project in building up a conceptual framework which includes the fundamental theoretical considerations of the institutional dimension of the social life in order to explain the link between the concepts of individual action and organizational action in education at school level. The paper is confined only to some of the preliminary conceptual considerations on the subject which would, hopefully, be capable of being developed into a framework for explaining the dynamics of educational action at individual and organizational levels in future studies.

Institutional Structure of Education

Education is considered to be one of the highly developed institutions (Eisenstadt, 1968; Illich, 1970; Meyer,1977; Meyer, Scott, & Deal, 1981). It can conveniently be conceptualized as a transnational social institution or a world cultural phenomenon like science and technology. It can be viewed as a worldwide system, when one considers the fundamental themes in education like ontology of education - what education is or the social reality of education; its structure or how it is organized; and the legitimacy of

education - justification behind the social existence of education (Boli & Ramirez, 1986). The elements emerging from such considerations cannot fully evolve just in a part of the world culture, within national boundaries. The evolution process of these elements transcends national boundaries. It occurs in a world culture. Both individual and organization are linked together by this broad system which is the institution of education. It is a system of powerful influence. It has grown over the years as a system of interaction which encompasses highly complex human activities. Within the system, interaction is largely organized. It is so powerful and influential that it structures and regularizes what students experience in their learning. It creates the image of a system where students are processed in a standardized line of activities and thought (Meyer, 1987). This results, basically, from the way how all actions are, in different degrees, controlled by this powerful system. What teachers do in schools is highly dictated by a vast institutional script. This whole exercise is manifested in each individual school organization. This complex system of activities is viewed as a highly developed institution in the society.

The concept of institution is defined in different ways. As Smith (1964) points out the concept of institution is frequently associated with cultural structure. This association, as he sees, gives rise to the meaning that an institution is a "cluster of interrelated social norms which are associated with a nucleus of high priority values and one or more basic human needs" (Smith, 1964, p.198). Another emphasis is the different forms of established procedures of activity and also the associated social conditions which can lie in the center of cultural structure (Smith, 1964). The concept of "institution" can also be understood as "cultural rules giving collective meaning and value to particular entities and activities integrating them into the larger schemes" (Meyer, 1987, p.13). Another way of looking at institutions is as "frameworks of programs or rules establishing identities and activity scripts for such identities" (Jepperson, 1991).

As the institutional thinking views, the basic point of argument is centered round the question whether the institutions are necessarily the products of purposive human actions. Most traditions treat the concept of institution as it is necessarily related to purposive human action. But to the new thinking on the subject, institution is a product of human action, but not necessarily of purposive human action (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Most of the propositions developed under institutional thinking in organization literature reveal a potential conceptual scheme for explaining how the educational action of the individual who is entrusted with providing education in an organizational setting is embodied in the institutional structure of education, and how both individual action and organizational action complement each other.

As the institutional theory and the related conceptions on social action (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; DiMaggio, 1988; Selznick, 1949, 1957; Garfinkel, 1967; Berger & Luckman, 1966; Parsons, 1937; Schutz, 1932/1967; Weber, 1947) suggest, what occurs in the school can be conceptualized as a structural embodiment of the institution of education. One school of social thought inspired by institutional theory and the related conceptions of social action (Meyer, 1994, 1987, 1986, 1977; Meyer, Boli, & Thomas, 1987; Boli & Ramirez, 1986; Meyer, Scott, & Deal, 1981; Meyer & Rowan, 1978, 1977) argues that the major source of influence for the actions in school is the institutional structure of education and consequently the meaning of school and the complexities of its assigned social function are rooted in a wide environment of social action. As they explain, the structure of the institution of education is a system of meanings, ideologies, rules, and values which are being constantly evolved in a broad cultural system. In more specific terms, their argument shows that the institutional structure of education is a rule-based collective meaning and a value system which integrates a particular set of entities and activities to a larger scheme in the society. Further they argue that institutional structure of education provides the necessary frame of reference and the meaning structure for what teachers and principals do in executing the

educational process. Any interpretation of the actions of teachers and principals becomes meaningful, they argue, only when those interpretations are, in historical, social, and cognitive terms, grounded on the wide environment of the institutional structure of education.

The logic behind the actions of individuals in organizations and how they relate to the organization lies in the institutional structure of a given human activity. The practical manifestation of human action within individual organizational limits does not necessarily mean that the logic of such action and the related dynamics are a system confined to the limits of an individual organization. Each organization is an institutionally constructed social entity. Most of the educational literature on the dynamics of school organization is built on the theoretical expositions built around individual organizations. Selznick (1957) observes in this regard:

> The organization thus designed is a technical instrument for mobilizing human energies and directing them toward set aims....it is governed by the related ideals of rationality and discipline.
>
> The term 'organization' thus suggests a certain bareness, a lean, no-nonsense system of consciously co-ordinated activities. It refers to an expandable tool, a rational instrument engineered to do a job. An 'institution', on the other hand, is more nearly a natural product of social needs and pressures - a responsive, adaptive organism (p.5).

It is true that educational action is organized within the formal organization of school. But the meaning of school and the complexities of its assigned social function are rooted in a wider space of social action which is the institutional structure of education.

A Reconceptualization of some of the structural elements of the institution of Education

Institutionalism is generally associated with its concern on the environment of organization. This concern helps to understand a basic social force which brings the self and collective together in schools and provide common meanings to their associated actions. One fundamental proposition in institutionalism is that all aspects of the organizational life are embedded in broader environments and constantly affected by the behavior of environmental forces (Selznick, 1949; Meyer, 1994). These aspects include the identity, the formal structure, routines of activities of the organization, and even the overall existence of the organization (Meyer, 1994). These aspects, in the context of schools and also other organizations, are closely associated with how each individual in organizations acts and also how each organization, as a collective entity, organizes those individual actors and their actions. Environmental forces operate "through broad changes in legitimacy and the cognitive patterning of rationalized culture" (Meyer, 1994). This makes schools to engage in a continuous attempt to maintain a long-standing harmony between the self and the collective. Their action patterns are closely scrutinized by the legitimacy demands and the cognitive elements of the rationalized culture. Under institutional approach, the environmental focus is mainly related to the social environment of organization, especially how the organization is influenced by its social environment, and also the history of the organization (Selznick, 1957). The significance of the focus on social environment can mainly be attributed to the fact that the concept of social institution "suggests an emphasis on problems and experiences that are not adequately accounted for within the narrower framework of administrative analysis" (Selznick, 1957, p.6). Under this emphasis, as Selznick (1957) points out, several questions can be raised such as how the organization justifies its existence ideologically, what is the need for the existence of the organization and also how the organization adapts to the different centers of power existing in the community.

The early interpretations of school environment were mainly confined to the local environment of school organization. Such interpretations focus on how organizations are "embedded in local communities, to which they are tied by the multiple loyalties of personal and by inter organizational treaties" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991,p.13). Making the idea more restricted, open system theory conceives of organizational environment as a part of the production process in its theoretical scheme. Both these interpretations represent a limited meaning of school environment and as a result they do not focus on how individual and his actions in an organizational context cope with organizational demands or how those two entities complement each other. But, institutionalism has contributed in a significant way to reconceptualize the environments of organizations (Scott, 1991). Institutionalists see the institutionalized elements of institutions, such as institutionalized rules and beliefs, as the most crucial forces of the environments of organizations in shaping organizations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1991). Relatively the environments of organizations like schools and churches are technically weak, but institutionally strong (Scott, 1991).

Recent thinking in institutionalism provides a deeper meaning for organizational environment. This theory is very eloquently expressed in the following words by Meyer, Boli, and Thomas (1987):

> The institutions constructing and giving meaning to modern social entities and their rationalized action have a much more wider and more universal character than any particular setting they constitute.....[E]conomic, educational, or political action is legitimated in terms of quite general claims about progress, justice, and the natural order.....The differences that do arise within local settings are limited and remain within the context of the broader cultural frame (p.27).....[I]n modern social systems, it is fruitful to see social structure not as the assembly of patterns of local interaction but as ideological edifices of institutionalized elements that derive their authority from more-universal rules and conceptions (p.29).

Institutional elements such as rules and ideological forces bind teachers and their organizational settings together and provide common meanings to a majority of their action orientations.

Related to the issue of environment another theme emerges is the legitimacy of educational action in school organizations. With the reconceptualization of environment the concept of legitimacy in organization theory takes a new turn. As Scott (1991) points out, the early conceptualization on the subject was that, for the organization to be legitimated, "the correspondence of the values pursued by the organizations must be congruent with wider societal values ...[and]...legitimacy has been largely interpreted as pertaining to societal evaluations of organizational goals" (p.169). But, institutionalism emphasizes the cognitive dimension of legitimacy, the connections between means and ends, and also the need for the actions to be located within a broad and comprehensible context of meaning (Scott, 1991). Accordingly, institutionalists emphasize, "organizational legitimacy as derived from a wider environment, rather than as constructed by local actors in local situations out of their own distinctive or unique interpretations" (Meyer & Scott, 1992, p. 200). To put the same proposition differently, it is basically a question of how far an organization can secure cultural support for its existence by way of explanations through cultural accounts (Meyer & Scott, 1992). Under this interpretation both individual and organization are situated in a broad meaning structure. The meanings behind their actions encompass a wide spectrum of individual and organizational dynamics. Those meanings can generate a wide variety of common grounds for the self and the collective to complement each other and legitimate educational action.

The process of institutionalization: how things get institutionalized within organizations is another institutional focus which generate some insights to see the complementary nature of individual and organizational actions in schools. In the tradition of institutional thinking institutionalization is identified as, with all its other functions, a

process which constrains organizational rationality (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). The sources of constraint, of course, vary. One is vested interests, as it was highlighted in early conceptions of institutionalization. Another is , as recent thinking on the subject conceives, how legitimacy of the organization is related to the stability of the same organization, or how they interact (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Another is common understandings of the people within the organization (Zucker, 1983). When rationality is constrained the subjective elements associated with the self and his action orientations find a comfortable ground to coexist with organizational action orientations. Especially, institutionalization in education demands more and more value oriented action patterns which can be expected from organizationally situated autonomous intellectuals rather than from 'role incumbents' of a hierarchical organizational setup. Institutionalization is mainly seen as a process which organizations have to undergo overtime and this process reflects the history, people of the organization and also how it adapts to its environment (Selznick, 1957). By this process activities become part of the organization normatively or cognitively and taken for granted as lawful by formal law or custom or by knowledge (Meyer et al, 1987). Individuals become more prominent figures in such a context. Organization is created and recreated by historical growth and development patterns of individuals who constantly generate common grounds for them to coexist with groups and act toward common purposes.

Institutionalization is an essential part of human existence. An institution implies a context of order, direction and stability. Human existence takes place only in such a context (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The social order in this context is an "ongoing human production" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.51). As Scott (1987) discusses, institutionalization is closely associated with the concepts of "social order" and "actions by individuals". Social order is a result of individuals' actions, their interpretations, and the sharing of those interpretations with others. Scott (1987) sees institutionalization as

"the process by which actions become repeated over time and are assigned similar meanings by self and others" (p.495).

Before getting institutionalized, actions go through the process of habitualization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). As Berger and Luckmann (1966) point out, habitualization is a phenomenon all human action is subject to. As they point out, when actions become habitualized they become routines in one's system of knowledge. But those actions do not lose their particular meanings which are crucially important for the individual for future action. They say, "Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.54). In education, routine presents a comfortable position for individual teacher to situate herself or himself and find links between his or her actions and the action orientations of the complex organizational process of instruction. This doesn't impose a constraint on growth and development of education.

Institutionalization is related to growth and development in education. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue, "the back ground of habitualized activity opens up a foreground for deliberation and innovation" (53). This argument suggests that institutionalization generates opportunities for growth and innovations within school organizations. This concern is crucial in school organizations under any consideration of the complexity of action that the school is socially entrusted with, especially, when understanding and dealing with the whole system of uninstitutionalized action in the organization. Individual teachers make a variety of contributions by creatively intervening in the process of growth and innovation living with constant institutionalization of educational action. The process of growth and innovation can hardly be distinguished from the process of institutionalization. As this discussion reveals, they are two aspects of the same institutional process. Institutional structure provides a common meaning structure for both the individual and the organization to build up links in their action orientations. An

up-ward mobile teacher who searches for new knowledge can highly be motivated by the complex aspects of diversity in her classroom. Diversity is something organization presents to her. To reach her goals of up-ward mobility she would be motivated by both action orientations: search for new knowledge which is a part of the self, and diversity which is organizationally created.

Institutionalization in education is closely associated with the dimension of value. It generates a significant meaning of the concept of the institution of education. More than any other dimension, the most significant meaning of the concept of institution is, "to institutionalize is to infuse with value beyond the technical requirement of the task at hand" (Selznick, 1957, p.17). Selznick (1957, 1992) sees the realization of values as central to institutions. What is seen through an institution is some orderly patterns which are also stable and socially integrating and also which have emerged out of narrow, unstable and loosely organized technical activities (Selznick, 1992). With the development of these patterns it develops high levels of loyalty and commitment as inbuilt parts of institution (Selznick, 1992). When a structure or process is instilled with value it generates within it an intrinsic worth and makes it stable and persistent (Scott, 1987). It provides a strong ground for the individual and the organization to create a common program of action. Value dimension cannot be separated from educational action. All aspects of educational action become embodied in the institutional structure with their value dimension. The value system related to action makes it easy for the existing institutional structure to screen and accommodate new forms of individual action in a particular organizational setting. Each action is judged mainly in reference to its corresponding value system.

Institutional interpretations focus on the theme of goals in organizations as a conceptual link between the individual and organization in a different way as compared to the previous interpretations on the subject. The previous thinking on the subject was characterized by the organization's primacy of goal orientation. In explaining this

thinking, Parsons (1951) sees action as a process which takes place within a system comprising, mainly as its major components, actor and situation. Actor can be an individual actor or a collectivity. However its marked feature is the motivational significance to the actor. This means that individual action is basically determined by "attainment of gratifications or the avoidance of deprivations of the relevant actor" (Parsons, 1951, p.4). How the elements of action are organized is determined by how the actor is related to the given situation and also to the history of that relationship. In an event of an actor taking action, one fundamental thing happens is that the actor structures his expectations regarding various elements of the situation with high concern on his need dispositions and also the extent to which different alternatives of action would affect gratification or deprivation (Parsons, 1951). Such an explanation gives rise to the proposition that "primacy of orientation to the attainment of a specific goal" (Parsons, 1960, p.17) is the fundamental organizing element of individual action in school related to the educational process. As Parsons (1960) elaborates on this proposition, each organization's primacy of specific goal orientation affects the internal structure of the organization and also the external system of the organization's relations.

Institutionalism does not confine the organizational thought to the idea of goals as its central focus. It basically conceives that both individual and collective actions in organizations are determined by the respective institutional structures rather than by the internally derived goals of organizations. Institutional thinking emphasizes that both the creation and the evolution of school's identity and its integrity are basically based on an institutionally evolved broader system of goals which resembles a system of societal beliefs and expectations of education which links each individual organization of school with the institution of education. The concept of individual action in school cannot be fully accommodated within an explanation of specific goal orientation which gives undue recognition to the concept of 'unique school'. Institutionalism doesn't agree with the idea that every school is completely a unique school. As Perrow (1986) interprets institutional

thinking, institutionalism treats organization as a whole and this leads to the concept of variety of organizations. But as he points out, this does not lead to the conclusion that every organization is unique. But they are considered to differ only in the sense that how widely organizations differ and generate broad bases to classify them. This proposition compels to reconsider some of the assumptions on which educational process and the related individual actions in education are presumed to be organized. One popular assumption is that each school is unique in nature since each school has to be considered as a whole. This seems to be an over estimation of the organic character of an organization.

Institutional interpretation on rational behavior of individual and organization

The link between the individual and the organization in education, behavioristic thinking attempts to build up, doesn't explain the complementarity between these two entities in most of the complex action situations. Organizational thinking in education is heavily influenced by behaviorism. As a result, the study of the organizational character of education was mostly dominated by the concerns of individual behaviors and the "production process" those behaviors were associated with. As DiMaggio & Powell (1991) explain, the essence of behavioral thinking is an interpretation of "collective political and economic behavior as the aggregate consequence of individual choice" (p.2), and also the behaviorists view "institutions as epiphenomenal, merely the sum of individual properties" (p.2). But with the steady developments in non behaviorist thinking, the study of organizational process and social action is gradually being transformed into a field where much of the process of conceptualization is shaped by the analytical concerns of the dynamics of the institutional roots of social phenomena. Dynamics of the institutional structure is emphasized.

Institutional realities of education explain how individual action in school is structured in organizations. Institutionalism explaining these realities reject the idea that

organizational behavior in education is the aggregate of the individual actions in school. It rejects two basic assumptions which lead to the conviction that organizational behavior is the aggregate of the individual action. First one is that "individuals pursue material and, especially, ideal interests (defined of course, more broadly than in utilitarian thought)" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p.14). Second one is "that such individual striving leads to organizational rationality" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p.14). While rejecting the theory of individual action based on intentionality, the central concept on which the above assumptions were built and leads to the thesis that organizational behavior is the aggregate of individual actions, institutionalists argue for "an alternative theory of individual action, which stresses the unreflective, routine, taken-for-granted nature of most human behavior and views interests and actors as themselves constituted by institutions" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p.14).

Most importantly the central propositions of the institutional theory challenge the existing knowledge base built around the autonomous rational actor model of organizations. Institutional theory is an alternative to rational conceptions of organizations. Recent thinking in institutionalism in organization theory rejects rational actor-models (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Under the influence of the models developed in natural sciences organization theory basically inherited the assumption that the dynamics of organizations can be understood through the rational behavior of its actors. Also the structural details were created, and elaborated as it demands for the persistence of such behavior in the hope that such an organizational arrangement would bring about the maximum satisfaction of people's needs. These structural arrangements are organizationally nourished by the accompanying formal accounts. One major concern in institutionalism is to explain the various aspects of reality which are, in different degrees, inconsistent with these formal accounts of the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Most of the organization theories are, in their explanations, confined to such formal accounts. They do not explain organization in its institutional or societal context

(Friedland & Alford, 1991). Institutional contexts can reveal wider and deeper accounts which could explain multiple realities of the internal dynamics of the organization. Friedland & Alford (1991) propose a project to develop "a nonfunctionalist conception of society as a potentially contradictory inter institutional system" (p.240). Such conceptions can provide the necessary theoretical reasoning for studying organizations in their particular institutional contexts and explaining the accompanying wider accounts. Such conceptions and institutionally oriented accounts also explain the link between individual action and the institution. In this regard Friedland & Alford (1991) point out: "To position individuals and organizations in society, we require mediating concepts. The institutional level provides a critical bridge" (p.242).

Influenced by the concept of the rational behavior of organizations, to some extent, even the early conceptions of institutionalism saw irrationality outside the formal structure which was assumed to be built on rationality. This is quite similar to the dichotomy most organizational theorists saw between formal structure and informal structure in organizations. Even the early conceptions of institutionalism highlight the informal structure in organizations, and how the rational goals and processes are undermined by the informal accounts of the organizational life. But what the recent tradition in institutional thinking believes is that the irrationality lies in the formal structure itself. Making a significant breakthrough in institutional thinking, and highlighting the thesis of irrationality in formal structure, Meyer & Rowan (1977), in their seminal paper, argued that what formal structures actually reflect are not the demands for organizational activities but the myths of their institutional environments, and further, they argued that institutional rules functioning as myths make the organizations legitimate and stable.

Individual action in school is influenced by the concerns of legitimacy and survival. To increase the legitimacy of the organization and its capacity for survival, "organizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by

prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p.340). This means that any new action is screened by the prevailing rationalized and institutionalized system. This influence is more elaborated by Meyer & Rowan (1977) when they say that more often what organizations reflect are not the demands of their work activities, but the "myths of their institutional environment" (p.341). Individual action in school is shaped by some institutional rules which are essentially not to do with the core of the learning process. The point raised by some in this regard is about what essentially should conform to institutional rules, whether it is how educational action in the school is coordinated or some other elements supportive to educational action. The latter is the top priority. How teachers should be categorized, what their credentials are, what topics to be included, how children should be selected, and what facilities to be provided are some concerned priority elements which should conform to the institutional rules. How educational action is coordinated and related dynamics are of less concern (Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981). Defining students, classifying them in grades, and assigning properly credentialled teachers to them, all these carry with them standardized meanings in all school settings in the country without much concern on heterogeneity which really opens up a whole new meaning system for educational action.

This same confusion of action in schools has been discussed by Illich (1970). He says, "They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: The more treatment there is, the better are the results; or, escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby 'schooled' to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say some thing new" (p.1). Some areas of school action is led by "the logic of more treatment". For example some educational needs which may not seem covered under a general rationalized structure of action in the school are attempted to be elaborated in the structure using special programs (Meyer, Scott, & Deal, 1981). For example reading

difficulties are one category of such "special needs" attempted to be serviced by "special programs". This "special program approach" represents the confusion in school action and leads to more and more treatments. The special programs are, in most cases, mandated by the state governments or the federal government and have become a part of the institutional structure by law. Meyer, Scott, & Deal (1981) argue:

> Schools even create counter-programs - as when radicals object to the official stigmatization of pupils created by one set of programs, and demand the installation of another set to make sure that the hypothetically segregated handicapped students are effectively 'mainstreamed'. (p.163).

This whole scenario of special programs and counter programs shows that individual action in education occurs in a confused context of educational needs and corresponding educational action. This kind of a situation can only be rationalized through the established institutional rules, but not through the principles of actual human needs of education and the action required.

Subtle internal forces in action within the institutional structure

Institutional structure comprises, among other structural elements, a philosophy for internal arrangements in the school which are supposedly designed for facilitating educational process, basically elements of teaching and learning. This philosophy controls individual action, what teachers and principals do in the school. This philosophy can change with time. It reveals a historical process. What we had a century or two ago was not the same we have today. As Giroux (1988) points out, today this philosophy is dominated by a thinking of a management pedagogy. He sees the presence of this philosophy in instances like how "knowledge is broken down into discrete parts, standardized for easier management and consumption, and measured through predefined forms of assessment" (Giroux, 1988, p.124). As he argues, the whole complex system of learning questions in school is attempted to be reduced to a system of management

questions. As a result the system of educational action in school is overburdened with some peripheral concerns. Willower (1989) says, "batch processing, rules governing student behavior, elaborate logistical arrangements, and other forms of routinization can be seen as efforts to make multiple activities, substantial variety, and high population density more manageable" (p.12). This philosophy defends both the individual and organization in their action. Also it functions as an institutional agent to build up a conflict-free mutual understanding between the individual teacher and the school organization to rationalize what they expect and how they act.

This philosophy simplifies education: a complex and exiting system of human action, to an insignificant process. This situation has led to turn individual action of teachers to a system of implementation of methods (Giroux, 1988). The whole challenge of educational action has been transformed into a simple quest for "finding the 'right' teaching methods" (Bartolome, 1994, p.173). What can be seen is an instrumental ideology which emphasizes a technocratic approach (Giroux, 1988). This can generally be interpreted as one aspect of the influence of the institutional structure on the individual action of teachers and the school organization. As Giroux (1988) explains, some assumptions of this ideology are:

- Conception is separated from execution
- To manage and control the school knowledge it has to be standardized.
- Practical considerations should be given primacy, not the critical or intellectual aspects.

The same ideology has been explained by Illich (1970) in what he saw in the institutionalization of values. Illich (1970) said, "institutionalization of values leads inevitably to physical pollution, social polarization, and psychological impotence: three dimensions in a process of global degradation and modernized misery" (p.1). This shows how an istitutional structural element can legitimate what happens within school

organizations, and most importantly how individual teachers are made to share it and promote it at their individual organizational level.

Meyer & Rowan (1978) argue that "to a considerable extent, educational organizations function to maintain the societally agreed rites defined in societal myths (or institutional rules) of education" (p.8). The same argument has been put forward by some as a replacement of "autonomous standards internal to education with a government decided set of economic and technological priorities" (Young, 1990, p.8). Young (1990) further says that "the essentially consensual life-world of the school is to be increasingly penetrated by contractual and legal oversight and made an administratively accountable and measurable part of the production system" (pp. 8,9). These developments take place at the institutional level and sweep through school organizations creating an environment for both individual and organization to agree upon their actions in education. The complementarity between these two entities is characterized by a mutual justification and sharing process.

The actions of teachers, and in general the actions of the school are shaped by the dictates of a developed scientific theory which evolves within the institutional structure in education. One significant way the structure of the institution of education influences the school organization, its teachers and their actions is through the scientific theory operating within the institutional structure of education. Meyer (1986) argues that " The modern educational system is itself an embodiment of scientific theory" (p.341). As Meyer (1986) sees it, this scientific theory conceives that:

- Society is the product of individuals living in it, and rationalized society results from rationalized individuals (He says that some see this as a simple linear relation).
- Improving masses of individuals results in general social improvement.
- Tastes, abilities, and capacities can be developed or modified through training and socialization.

- Categories of individuals are only a few, so, universal programs of modification are possible.
- These modifications and developments bare fruits in adult activity. In other words, these modifications and adult activities are related. These modifications remain intact till youngsters become adults.
- Most of the properties in the natural and social worlds where action takes place are orderly and lawful.
- A knowledge of general utility exists.
- Everyone's capacity can be improved through an instructional program built on this general knowledge.

To stay in line with this scientific theory both individual teachers and the organization in general agree upon a certain set of rational organizational and control systems. They standardize and regulate the system of education. Some specific cases in modern systems of education are "designed along the lines of.....a scientific analysis" (Meyer, 1987, p.158) are, "scientific theories of socialization;....rules of sequencing; .....curricular structure and interdependence, and .....pedagogical method" (Meyer, 1987, p.158). This science of education is institutionalized in a "worldwide system of rules" (Meyer, 1987, p.158). It also contributes to a great deal to determine the structure of the institution of education and it controls the technology of the school and the action of each individual and how they respond to organizational demands regarding daily business of providing education.

Education takes place in the society within a framework of institutional logics. Bacharach & Mundell (1993) argue that the process of political negotiation which takes place constantly in organizations to determine "order" in organizations is primarily based on a system of internal logic which they call "logics of action" which derives from the Weberian concept of social action. This system of logics influences educational action through what Friedland and Alford (1991) see as principles pertaining to material practices and symbolic constructions. In dealing with the concept of "central logic" in

institutional orders, Friedland & Alford (1991) argue: "These institutional logics are symbolically grounded, organizationally structured, politically defended, and technically and materially constrained, and hence have specific historical limits" (p.248-249).

Logics of action in an organization are defined as "forms of coherence among objectives" (Karpik, 1978, p.46), and also as "the implicit (that is, often unstated) relationship between means and goals that is assumed by actors in organizations" (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993, p.427). These definitions give rise to the notion that in organizations all means and ends are related to each other in a system of logic. Bacharach & Mundell (1993) see two different systems of logics of action respectively in bureaucratic and professional domains in the organizational set up of schools. The logics of action in the bureaucratic domain is characterized by accountability while autonomy is the center in professional logics of action. The bureaucratic logic of action is primarily based on the assumption that certainty can be made possible through the specifications in the relationship between means and goals while the professional logic of action assumes uncertainty as a pervasive organizational quality (Bacharach & Mundell 1993).

Individual action of those who are engaged in the educational process inside the school is also affected by "the social authority built into education" (Meyer, 1987, p.160). The social authority discussed by Meyer is one major determinant of the effects of the institutionalization of schooling and it becomes a major part of the structure of the institution of education. Meyer (1987) points out, "The social authority built into education adds to the incentives to learn and participate. It changes the logic of teaching and organizing instruction. And it alters the rational familial strategies for producing and preparing children for successful life careers" (p.160).

Some properties or principles which govern the educational action at individual and organizational levels can develop only within an institutional environment as parts of the institutional structure. Some examples are 'logic of confidence' and 'structural homogeneity'. On logic of confidence Meyer & Rowan (1977) point out:

> Despite the lack of coordination and control, decoupled organizations are not anarchies. Day-to-day activities proceed in an orderly fashion. What legitimates institutionalized organizations, enabling them to appear useful in spite of the lack of technical validation, is the confidence and good faith of their internal participants and their external constituents (pp. 357-358).

As Meyer & Rowan (1978) point out our actions in social settings are governed by, among other things, the principle of logic of confidence. Meyer & Rowan (1978) point out, "Parties bring to each other the taken - for - granted, good faith assumption that the other is, in fact, carrying out his or her defined activity.....None of these people can say what the other does or produces....., but the plausibility of their activity requires that they have confidence in each other" (p.102). Individual and the organization in general is coupled by this logic.

Individual action in school is also governed by institutionally created structural homogeneity. The system wide homogeneity in education is reported by several researchers (Tyack, 1974; Katz, 1971; Cohen, Deal, Meyer, & Scott, 1976; Cohen, Deal, Meyer, & Scott, 1979; Meyer et al., 1981; Cuban, 1993). As Meyer et al. (1981) point out, among different personnel in the system of education there is a high degree of agreement or consensus concerning the policies of educational action. As they point out this system wide homogeneity is caused by the institutional environment more than a specific organizational unit. They observe, "participants share a common conception of general features of the educational system in which they participate that is little affected by their specific organizational context" (p.161). They continue, "the participants within any given organizational unit, however, share only a limited set of rules or roles that are specific to that unit.....Most of their educational world and most of their interpretations of that world are institutionally constructed" (p.162). Cuban (1993) reports that teaching practices in the US have been "uncommonly stable at all levels of schooling.....over many decades"(p.2). This homogeneity is also related to the kind of impact the process of

educational change has been making over the decades. The process of educational change in American education reveals that the fundamental structure of American education had been fixed by 1880 and since then there has been no fundamental structural change (Katz, 1971). As Tyack & Tobin (1994) point out, the basic structures and rules of the instruction process or the "basic grammar of schooling" (p.454) have not changed over the decades. When the process becomes more and more homogeneous in its fundamental dimensions an individual teacher gets comfortable in adapting to the daily instructional demands of the organization.

The consensus on educational policies regarding educational action at school level and resulting structural homogeneity across all levels of the school system are results of institutional processes rather than organizational processes (Meyer et al, 1981; Scott, 1991). Research findings show that

> agreements on the nature of the school system and the norms governing it are worked out at quite general levels (through political processes, the development of common symbols, occupational agreements). Each school and district-and each teacher, principal, and district officer-acquires an understanding of the educational process and division of labor, not from relating to others within the same organizational unit, but from participating in the same institutional environment, from sharing the same educational 'culture' (Meyer et al, 1981, p.159-160).

Such strong institutional influence and the resulting homogenizing effect of the institutional processes or the "startling homogeneity of organizational forms and practices" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p.64) can be interpreted in several ways specially with reference to the action at organizational level. One is that the need for elaborate organizational structures may be reduced with such strong institutional influence, and it creates a situation where organizational control may be determined more by shared beliefs and taken for granted procedures rather than by formal structural arrangements of individual organizations (Scott, 1991). Another interpretation is that the resulting

homogeneity created by this institutional influence is not an end situation in organizational life and it is, as Durkheim (1893/1984) explained almost a century ago referring to the same phenomenon within the institution of marriage in his discussion on division of labor in society, a situation where it is considered "that this apparent reversion to a primeval homogeneity is no more than the beginning of a fresh differentiation" (p.21).

However, the structure of the institution of education is built and designed in such a way that inside it there has nurtured a capacity, through the process of institutionalization which constitutes a cumulative process and a systematic pattern and which has been occurring over several decades, to maintain, as Tyack and Tobin (1994) put it, an "institutional continuity" (p.453) by making "the established institutional forms of schooling" (p.453) stable over time. This capacity enables the institutional structure to create what Friedland and Alford (1991) see in institutions: "[B]oth supraorganizational patterns of activity through which humans conduct their material life in time and space, and symbolic systems through which they categorize that activity and infuse it with meaning" (p.233). Such a capacity also enables the structure of the institution of education to interact with and get nourished by, as Meyer (1994) refers to, a "bigger environment" associated with organizational life. The largest such environment can be the world society with its all encompassing ideological systems and the systems of rules. Some other kinds of environments would be the institutional environments of other organizations and professions or the ideological structures such as human rights (Meyer, 1994). Referring to different roles, organizations, or state regimes Meyer et al (1987) point out that the actions of these agencies are adopted "within the constitutive order of" (p.27) what those agencies are meant to be.

Meaning structures and practical action

The institutional dimension of social life is also closely related to the dynamics of human understandings and the meaning structures people build around various actions. Weber (1947) sees the importance of 'interpretive understanding' in explaining cause and effect relationships in social action. Scott (1994) quotes Berger and Kellner (1981) emphasizing meanings as a central element in institutions: "[E]very human institution is, as it were, a sedimentation of meanings, or, to vary the image, a crystallization of meanings in objective forms. As meanings become objectivated, institutionalized, in this manner, they become common reference points for the meaningful actions of countless individuals, even from one generation to another" (Berger & Kellner, p.31. As cited in Scott, 1994, p.58). The concept of "structures of meaning" (Weber, 1947; Geertz, 1973) is widely used in institutionalism in conceptualizing various aspects of the structures of "action". One way of using the concept of structures of meaning is to examine the meanings attributed to actions.

One way educational action in school is embodied in the institutional structure of education is through its meaning structure. Institutional structure of education stimulates different kinds of individual and collective actions and makes up the total educational process through its meaning structure. Emphasizing this aspect with regard to social action in general Weber (1947) says:

> In 'action' is included all human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. Action in this sense may be either overt or purely inward or subjective; it may consist of positive intervention in a situation, or of deliberately refraining from such intervention or passively acquiescing in the situation (p. 88).

Weber (1947) emphasizes "subjective meaning" in social action. He says that by the term meaning it is not meant of "an objectively 'correct' meaning or one which is 'true' in some metaphysical sense" (p.89). He talks about meaningful action and reactive behavior. No

subjective meaning is attached to reactive behavior. By "meaningful" what he means is subjectively understandable.

Agreeing with Weber, Schutz (1932/1967) also emphasizes the importance of understanding the subjective meaning of social action. The phenomenological thinking on action conceives that every action is oriented toward the future and this orientation occurs through the intentionalities of the lived experience which are also oriented toward the future. To clarify the concept of future-directedness of action, Schutz (1932/1967) quotes Husserl:

> In every action we know the goal in advance in the form of an anticipation that is 'empty', in the sense of vague, and lacking its proper 'filling-in', which will come with fulfillment. Nevertheless we strive toward such a goal and seek by our action to bring it step by step to concrete realization (Schutz, 1932/1967, p.58).

Schutz (1932/1967) sees a complex system of properties in action. The central property is that action is like a project. It occurs with an ongoing process of projection. He sees any projection of action as "a phantasying of action" (p.59). This property of phantasying is "an intuitive advance picturing which may or may not include belief, and, if it does, can believe positively or negatively or with any degree of certainty" (Schutz, 1932/1967, p.59). As he explains, anticipations of future are phantasies. They are not specific, they are vague, and they also do not express a determinate state of human involvement. Without any distinction between actions which are claimed to be rational and those are not, all actions have these properties (Schutz, 1932/1967). Educational actions individuals take in school are connected to an unending process of projection and a world of anticipations and phantasies which become meaningful and reveal a causal relationship only when organizational realities of school were sought through institutionally situated organizational analyses.

Institutional approach emphasizes a theory of practical action inclined toward ethnomethodology, phenomenology, and cognitive psychology (DiMaggio & Powell,

1991). Ethnomethodology is a form of "investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life" (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 11). Garfinkel (1967) sees practical and commonplace activities and circumstances as "phenomena in their own right" (p.1). The theoretical significance in this phenomena he emphasizes is:

> that the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members' procedures for making those settings 'accountable'..... When I speak of accountable my interests are directed to such matters as the following. I mean observable-and-reportable, i.e. available to members as situated practices of looking-and-telling. I mean, too, that such practices consist of an endless, ongoing, contingent accomplishment: that they are carried on under the auspices of, and are made to happen as events in, the same ordinary affairs that in organizing they describe; that the practices are done by parties to those settings whose skill with, knowledge of, and entitlement to the detailed work of that accomplishment - whose competence - they obstinately depend upon, recognize, use, and take for granted (Garfinkel, 1967, p.1).

Garfinkel's thoughts suggest that actions taken by individuals are linked together in a ongoing process of accomplishment and they are legitimated by a everyday life rationale. This is the organizational process we see every day in education. Progression of this process of accomplishment and legitimation occurs in each generation according to an institutional pattern. In other words, each individual's actions in a given organization become a component of the respective institutional structure. Also this means that the link between the individual's actions and the organization can be explained only in institutional terms. This phenomenon is either invisible or gives a distorted picture if an organization is analyzed as an unique social entity without situating it in its proper institutional context. The theory of structural looseness in education (Bidwell, 1965; Weick, 1976; Weick, 1982; Weick, 1984) and also the theory of organized anarchy

(Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972) bring the analysis into a stage where it emerges a conceptual need to explain the links individual action has with the supraorganizational patterns beyond the looseness between the structural components in school or the fluidity in those components. One aspect of this task would be to explain individual action in education as it occurs in school's organized setting expanding the organizational parameters to include the institutional realities in the analysis. Formal organizational structures arise in highly institutionalized contexts in modern society (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Greenfield (1975, 1978, 1980, 1988, 1991) has already shown that organizations have to be understood as invented realities and organizations are both limited and defined by human action. His thesis also reveals that in their deepest-subjective-reality, organizations are simply manifestations of mind and will and that organizations are essentially arbitrary definitions of reality woven in symbols and expressed in language. Even though Greenfield did not directly entered into an institutionally oriented analysis of school organization, his central thesis suggests that the multiple realities of what teachers and principals do in schools cannot be explained without assuming that the meanings of what happens in school are found in a wider environment.

The recent trends in institutional theory are characterized by their emphasis on the "importance of idealist concerns - symbolic systems, cognitive scripts, and normative codes" (Scott, 1994, p.56). As Friedland & Alford (1991) point out, the way conventionally institutions are understood is inadequate. They point out that, especially, the central conception of this understanding is based on the idea that institutions can be understood as "supra organizational patterns of organizing social life rooted in shared norms" (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p.242). The inadequacy in this conception, as they explain, is that it relies on "an exterior normative, as opposed to an interior cognitive, order" (p.242). They argue that institutions must be reconceptualized. The new conceptualization, as they point out, should include both material and ideal aspects of institution and also both the rational and transrational aspects. They also argue that

institutions have to be conceptualized both as supra organizational patterns and symbolic systems of human action. Such a reconceptualization, as they explain, suggests several fundamental institutional functions in modern society. One is making time and space people experience meaningful and organizing them. Another function is ordering reality through symbolic means. A third function is to provide a frame of reference for human action to occur in a continuing process of securing survival both at individual and organizational levels. Recent thinking in institutionalism also focuses heavily on the "properties of supra individual units of analysis that cannot be reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p.8). Institutions are something more than the sum of individual properties. This suggests that complementarity between the two entities under discussion are, to a large extent, formed at a supra level of both individual and organization. This level represents a common ground for both the entities.

Growing intimacy between individual and organization

Analyzing the individual and organizational dimensions in education, Greenfield (1975) sees the intimate relationship between organization and individual action and he rejects the dualism which separates human purposes, feelings, and actions from organizations. Through this intimate relationship he sees organizations as invented social realities. Greenfield (1975) argues:

> The crux of the issue is whether social reality is based upon naturally existing systems or upon human invention of social forms. Social reality is usually construed as a natural and necessary order which, as it unfolds, permits human society to exist and people within it to meet their basic needs. Alternatively, social reality may be construed as images in the mind of man having no necessary or

> inevitable forms except as man creates them and endows them with reality and authority. In the one perspective, organizations are natural objects - systems of being which man discovers; in the other, organizations are cultural artifacts which man shapes within limits given only by his perception and the boundaries of his as a human animal (pp. 76, 78).

What emerges from this conceptualization is that, in modern education, no matter how much it is engulfed by educational organizations, individual is the "master" and his action is an embodiment of the institutional structure of education. If this image of individual is lost educational organization loses its meaning.

The individual image emerging from the school organization is the institutional portrait of the teachers built around their individual actions in organized education. Reminding Durkheim's thinking on the subject, Bidwell (1980) says, "age, vocation, and intellectual and cultural superiority.....combine to make the teacher the dominant classroom actor " (p.100). He has been made the "microcosmic embodiment" (Bidwell, 1980, p.100) of institutionalized educational action. He plays a central institutional role in the classroom. His actions reflect a universal character. Individual school organization has to be reconceptualized as an institutionally defined human collectivity in which there lies a true potential for developing unique individuals whose actions are oriented toward their own self-actualization and improving the quality of educational action. Such a conceptualization would reflect conflicting interests under a traditional analysis. But it does not under an institutionally grounded organizational analysis. The institutional structure of education with its ever expanding social and cognitive boundaries has the capacity to create broad unifying patterns between unique individuals and the orientations of their actions, and school organization. To see those unifying patterns institutions also need to be, as Friedland & Alford (1991) argue,

> reconceptualized as simultaneously material and ideal, systems of signs and symbols, rational and transrational. Institutions are supraorganizational patterns of

> human activity by which individuals and organizations produce and reproduce their material subsistence and organize time and space. They are also symbolic systems, ways of ordering reality, and thereby rendering experience of time and space meaningful (p.243).

Such reconceptualizations of both school organization and the institutional structure of education reveal the multidimensional unifying effects of the institutionally embodied actions of unique individual teachers and principals who constantly interpret and reinterpret educational action in modern society. Understanding those effects would provide a theoretical foundation to explain what Ruth Nanda Anshen (Illich, 1970) saw in intimacy and integration between universality and individuality or between dynamics and form or individual person and collective person.

Conclusion

School is a small social unit where individuals are organized for educational purposes. But the actions of the individuals who provide the service of education within the school are not solely determined by the variables of the individual school organization alone. The major source of influence for those actions is the institutional structure of education. Those actions are embodied in that structure. Institutional structure of education provides the necessary frame of reference and the meaning structure for what teachers and principals do in executing the educational process. Any interpretation of the actions of teachers and principals becomes meaningful only when those interpretations are grounded on, in historical, social, and cognitive terms, the wide environment of the institutional structure of education.

The fundamental argument behind conceptualizing individual action in school as an embodiment of the institutional structure of education is that the educational collectivity formally organized as "school organization" becomes meaningful and operational through the rules of the institutional structure of education. School

organization is the immediate collective unit of analysis. But its analytical and interpretive foundations lie in the larger structure of the institution of education of which the school organization is a functional instrument of the educational process. This argument suggests that, especially in human systems of action like education, the actions of individuals do not become total victims of structural arrangements of an individual organization if those arrangements do not reflect the institutional realities of that system of human action. Their actions reflect supraorganizational and supraindividual patterns which become understandable only in the context of institutional structure. These patterns build a bridge between the individual and the organization and their action orientations. As school individuals' educational actions become embodied in the institutional structure of education, they also become more comprehensible to others and more controllable by others. Through this process there develops, within each school organization, a certain universal character of educational action.

By situating the analysis in the institutional context of education it helps to identify a basic rationale of how educational action expands from individual actions to organizational actions in school context and vise-versa. The theoretical propositions regarding how individual action in the organizational context of education can be conceptualized as embodied in the institutional structure of education help to further the understanding of organizational dynamics in complex action situations in education. The paper also attempted at creating a conceptual background to argue that individual action in education doesn't totally become victimized by the bureaucratic phenomenon. Because, the actions of teachers and principals are largely regulated by the dictates of the institutional structure. Institutional structure of education is not purely bureaucratic. It is rather a system of meanings, ideologies, rules, and values which are being constantly evolved in a world culture. The full potential of the school is still to be harnessed. What is immediately needed is a variety of explanations using different perspectives. This inquiry

made an attempt toward this end and opens up a dialogue on the central thesis and its related research concerns.

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